

You Already Are,
What You Seek!

By
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This booklet is the transcription of a purposeful dialogue during a “Sat Sanga with Ramana” attended by several students and guest participants, held at Arunachala Ramana AHAM Ashram in Tiruvannamalai, India on January 10, 2006. (“SAT SANGA” MEANS ABIDING IN PURE CONSCIOUSNESS, OR THE TRUE SELF, OR IN THE COMPANY OF A SELF-REALIZED BEING). The talk deals with a not uncommon question raised by a guest who was attending for the first time. It is designed to get the reader in touch with the clever strategy of the mind to keep one SEEKING peace and contentment, and failing to realize the natural state of pure Being – that is always, already present AS pure Peace and Contentment.

Ramana: A guest participant has written a question. He asks, “Can you look at me, and tell me the best way to go forward?” He also writes, in parenthesis, that he desires to have removed any obstacles to his enlightenment.

Ramana: (to the participant) Have you been to very many Spiritual Teachers or Gurus?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: Have you asked them this same question?

Participant: Yes, a few times.

Ramana: Has anyone told you?

Participant: No.

Ramana: Did anyone give you any enlightening “words,” but the words did not inform or “tell you” or “speak to” *you*, or your question ?

Participant: Yes they did. But no, I did not receive any clear or definite answer.

Ramana: OK. What if you did get a clear and definite answer, would you be able to recognize it?

Participant: I don’t know. Maybe there is no answer.

Ramana: There *is* an answer. And yes, I *can* look right at you and give you the answer. Now whether or not you can “hear it,” or whether or not you can “apply it,” that may be another matter, *entirely*. I admire your desire to have any and all obstacles removed to what you call “enlightenment.” OK? I admire that. So, what’s standing in the way?

Participant: I don’t know. Maybe one problem is that I can’t recognize the obstacles.

Ramana: Who is it that says that you are not enlightened?

Participant: My ego, perhaps.

Ramana: Ah, your ego. Then, that would be the obstacle that is standing in the way?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: Well that's your answer right there. I don't even have to answer it. You *already* answered it for yourself. So, why are you letting your ego stand in your way?

Participant: I don't know how to overcome the ego.

Ramana: OK.

Participant: "I" am doing this, or "this" is happening to me. I know this from books, I know it *intellectually*, but I have not realized it.

Ramana: What will this realization be, when you have it?

Participant: I don't know. One problem in my case perhaps is that it is very difficult for me to visualize what realization is.

Ramana: What if I told you there *wasn't* any – that is, not any "realization" – how would you deal with that?

Participant: That I don't know.

Ramana: This “I” that *knows*, and *doesn't* know. Do you know what it is?

Participant: (Noticeably uncomfortable) No.

Ramana: I am not asking you this question to put you on the spot; I am asking you only for you to get in touch with some of your notions, some of the *concepts* you have, some of the ideas you may have *about* this matter called enlightenment. Are you with me? (Yes) OK.

The mind or sense of “I” is *itself* the bondage; it is the one problem. Liquidate the mind, that sense of “I,” or “me,” *at its source*, at the place where it arises in the Self – which is within you – and your natural state, the Self, will be *already* present.

Thought is the problem; the “thinker.” If you were not thinking that you were not enlightened, what would you be?

Participant: I don't know, because many people who are not interested in spiritual progress do not think about it, and they are not enlightened.

Can you Deny Your own Existence?

Ramana: OK. Let's not worry or think about them, only of you. Let me ask you: Do *you* exist? Do you *know* that *you* exist?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: How do you know that you exist?

Participant: My consciousness.

Ramana: All right, so you exist; and is your existence different from your consciousness?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: Oh? So are there two of you, one that is conscious, and one that knows that you are conscious? Do you call yourself, "Us?" Or, is there just consciousness, which *itself* is existence.

Participant: I would say there is just consciousness.

Ramana: Yes. That is all there is to it. There's nothing else to realize, or to be realized. Are you ready for that?

Participant: I hope so.

Ramana: Who's hoping?

Participant: Maybe my mind.

Ramana: Can you show me your mind?

Participant: No. My mind manifests itself in various ways.

Ramana: How does it do that?

Participant: Through my body, my facial expressions, the way I talk.

Ramana: How do you know that it is not pure existence that is doing all of that?

Participant: I don't know.

Ramana: So maybe you have a false concept about all this. I am not saying that you are not sincere; I am just being with you now. How far away are you from yourself?

Participant: I have no idea.

Ramana: You are consciousness itself, you have just acknowledged that, that your existence *is* your consciousness, didn't you? So, how far away are you from consciousness?

Participant: I am not. I *am* conscious.

Ramana: Yes. You *are* Consciousness, *itself* – not *just* conscious. The mind is conscious, it is not itself consciousness, it *borrow*s its consciousness from *YOU*, the Self. How long have you been involved in spiritual work?

Participant: About 20 years.

Ramana: About 20 years. And you've been to a lot of teachers?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: None of them so far has given you any indications of *what it really is all about?*

Participant: I think that some have helped, but none of them has really helped me in the big way.

Ramana: Are you a devotee of Sri Bhagavan Ramana?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: How long have you been a devotee of Bhagavan Ramana?

Participant: I first came to Ramana ashram eight years ago; before that I had read some books.

Ramana: OK. What did you get from what you read?

Participant: It made me realize that he is a *genuine* Guru, and I learned some general things, but I didn't really become conscious of the Self.

Ramana: OK. The self you think you are, the one you are identifying with the words "I, me, my, mine," do you think that it is the actual Self you *really* are?

Participant: I think they are just thoughts in the mind.

Ramana: OK. So, if you just abide in the awareness you presently are in, *prior to* the thoughts, *free* from the thoughts, what would you say that state is?

Participant: The state of pure Awareness.

Ramana: Let me ask you this: are you ever *not* in that state?

Participant: I think we are *all* really in that state, but very few realize it.

Ramana: But again, what is keeping *you* from realizing it, if you are already in that state as you correctly say we all are?

Participant: My ignorance, my *samskaras* (conditioned mind patterns).

Ramana: OK, in other words, *thoughts*.

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: So if you can just stop thinking, or stop *identifying* with thought, then you'll *already be* that State of Awareness? (Yes) Haven't you read that Bhagavan also shared with you (and all of us) just how to do that?

Participant: Yes, he did teach people how to trace the thought back to its source, but I don't really know how to do it.

Ramana: Are you aware of the sense of "I?"

Participant: I think so.

[Here Ramana means one's own "sense of being," or the "ego-self," or the thought "I-am-this-body."]

Awareness is *Prior to Thought* – Make the Distinction

Ramana: Can you make a distinction between the sense of "I" *as a thought*, and just Awareness itself, *prior to thought*?

Participant: I don't think so.

Ramana: What keeps you from being able to do that?

Participant: I don't know, or I'm just not sure.

Ramana: Maybe you are just not *familiar* with the difference. The sense of "I" comes up *after* Awareness, which itself *always* is. Do you get that?

Participant: Yes, I think so.

Ramana: OK. When would you like to “be” what you called “enlightened?” Just what *is* this, what does it mean to you?

Participant: I don’t know this, or what it is. I can’t describe the state of enlightenment; it is just a state of perfect perfection.

Ramana: Maybe you have some misconceptions here, on this notion as well. (Yes) You have already stated right here, as we are talking, that if you were not thinking where would you be?

Participant: At the Source.

Ramana: OK. Now what would that Source be?

Participant: Pure Consciousness.

Ramana: Yes, pure Being, or pure Consciousness. And you can not, really *not* be in that at anytime, right? Didn’t you just say that?

Participant: Yes, in truth, we are *all* that.

Ramana: OK. So, if we are *all* that, then can we ever *not* be that?

Participant: No.

Ramana: OK. So, we can never really *not* be that. That means then, that we really *always, already are that*.

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: So, what is it that keeps us from just being that?

Participant: Our thoughts.

Ramana: Yes, just thoughts. If you just *be still*, with a quiet mind, or abide in the *prior* pure Awareness, then you are *already* that. Sri Bhagavan said, if we just stop thought, we *are* that; all the sages say the same thing. Scripture says the same thing; if we just stop thought, or *stop identifying with the mind* and thought, we are *already* that.

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: OK. So again, here, when would you like to be that?

Participant: I would like to be able to stop all thought.

Ramana: OK. So, you would like to be able to stop all thought. Why don't you just stop thinking?

Participant: It's impossible to stop thinking.

Ramana: Well then, can you just abide in the simple Consciousness, or pure Awareness that you are, *prior to thought*, and just watch the thoughts? Can you do that, without identifying with the thoughts, or the mind and all the mind's thoughts?

Participant: I can try.

Ramana: What do you mean, "you can try?" Can't you just *do it*?

Participant: Maybe I can't do it.

Ramana: Sure you can! Can you, make the distinction or see the difference between Awareness, which itself is *prior to thought*, and thought? Awareness, or consciousness *must be even before* thought can be. You have already said that yourself, that we are all always abiding in this Awareness, or that we *all are* this Consciousness, or Awareness.

Right now, this moment, are you not aware when thoughts are going on?

Participant: Yes. I know that if you watch thought, then thought stops.

Ramana: And are you not still there? Are you not *still present*? (Yes) So, while you are observing thoughts – whether they stop or not – aren't you there *as the Awareness* itself, *aware* of the thoughts?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: OK. The thoughts are in the mind; you are *not* the mind. You are *prior* to the mind, beyond or *behind* the mind. The mind is *not you*, it is your possession, your “container for thoughts.” You cannot *be* “that which you possess.” You are the *possessor*.

So, whether the thoughts stop or not, you are still ever-present *as the Awareness* – aware of the thoughts when they are “going on” *and* when they are stopped, or not going on. Right?

Participant: Yes. (Though haltingly or tentatively).

Ramana: Right?

Participant: Well yes, but not consciously.

Ramana: What do you mean “not consciously?” Are you doing it unconsciously?

Participant: Most people are like me, they just have thoughts.

Ramana: Wait a minute! What is this “most people?” Who are they? *We* are talking here – just you and me. You said earlier, “many people who are not interested in spiritual progress do not think about it, and they are not enlightened.” *We agreed* that they do not really matter, and are not even to be considered, isn’t that right?

Participant: OK.

Ramana: Let's you and me be *right here together*, OK? This has *nothing* to do with "most people." We are talking here *only* about *you*, and what's so in *your* experience, all right?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: OK. So, if thoughts are going on, can't you be aware that these thoughts are going on?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: Right now, this moment, if thoughts are going on – if you are having *any* thought, if any thought comes up in you, say for example about our conversation – if it is bringing up some thoughts, can you be aware that the thoughts are going on? (Yes) And aren't you here *as the very Awareness* itself, *aware* of that?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: OK. Surprise! This is the *real* or enlightened Self! Just see: this *very* Awareness that you *are* – right now, whether *any* thought is going on or *not* – you *can't* say that you are *not* aware, or *not* existing. And, guess what! This is the *Real You*, and it has *always* been. This is what so-called "enlightenment" *i*

(*The participant is noticeably thinking, which is known to Ramana though not necessarily showing to everyone*).

Ramana: Did a thought enter just now, with what I said? (Yes) Did it take away from the fact that you are *right here – now – as the very Awareness itself*, and *aware* that a thought came in? (No)

Right now, this moment, aren't you aware? (Yes) And, are *fully* aware whether you are thinking or not? (Yes) So, you *can* detect the difference between thought and awareness?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: When did this moment *become* this moment? When did this instant, become this instant?

Participant: I don't know.

Ramana: Isn't this moment *always* right now, or this moment?

Participant: It is always now.

Ramana: Yes, it's *always* now. It is *always* this now-moment or *instant*; and in this always present moment, this always present *instant*, aren't you aware?

Participant: Yes.

There is *Only One* Awareness

Ramana: Well, the Awareness that *you are* – right now, in this moment, this instant – is the One and *only* Awareness. It didn't "go" anywhere, it is not "coming *from*" anywhere. It does not go or come. There is no forward, there is no backward; *it just is, as it is.*

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: Just stop for a minute. *Totally stop!* Be still! Right here... right now... this instant. Quit shaking or nodding your head. Be still as a stone. There is no forward to go to. We are *here*. You are *here*. There is no place to arrive at; you already *have* arrived. Where do you have to go, to *be* where you are? How far do you have to go to be *right now* where you are?

Participant: Nowhere.

Ramana: So, here we are. No matter where you go, there you are!

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: If the mind enters in – to bring up or look for something else – that's just another thought. That's starting another adventure in time and space, or beginning another story. But you are really *only*

this Awareness, here watching the mind as it looks for somewhere or something else. OK?

This is what's so, and yet so what? *That* is the mind; *just don't go there!* Make the distinction *right now*; you are the Awareness, you are *not* the mind which is "doing" those thoughts; you are right here *as* this Awareness. Aren't you?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: So, what's the "big deal?" What's the question? Where do you have to go?

Participant: Nowhere.

Ramana: What do you have to do?

Participant: Nothing.

Ramana: So, welcome home! And, you never left!

Participant: The problem is to know that all the time.

Ramana: All the time? What's time? What *is* time?

Participant: Just a matter of concepts.

Ramana: Exactly. That too is a thought, isn't it?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: Aren't you staying right here in this Awareness, even if thinking about time?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: So, does time *really* do anything about this Awareness?

Participant: No.

Ramana: Just let go. Let go of "time," and be. Being is always, already *prior to* time.

(Here Ramana asks if the participant's wife gets it).

Ramana: You get that there is nothing to get? (She agrees, laughing).

To the Participant: This is *IT*, my friend. You have been listening to your mind. Very simply now, don't listen to your mind. I am your friend. Your mind, if it is telling you anything otherwise, is not your friend. OK?

Participant: Yes.

Ramana: Everyone please listen to me. Since Tony (the new participant) doesn't know me, or he thinks he doesn't, maybe he needs some endorsements. For, the conscious presence here, the sense of stillness, or the quietness of mind being felt here may not itself be enough to satisfy the mind of our new

friend. (Humorously) Most of you who know me, am I telling the truth?

(Many people in the meditation hall say, "Yes, absolutely.")

Our new guest Tony also thinks he doesn't know himself. Well, here and now the Self *is* present, shining *as it is*.

(To the new participant) In spite of what you may think, it is *here* – what you are looking for – the pure Awareness, it is not this body. The I AM that I am *is* that Awareness; we *all* are that One Awareness, that is what *you are*, also. You are *not* the body, and never have been, you are the One, pure Awareness.

NOTE: This is only 21 pages of Ramana's booklet, which is a total of 41 pages. You can order a copy of the booklet, "You Already Are, What You Seek," by going to the following link:

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